

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 GUATEM 02683 021748Z
ACTION PM-04

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00
INR-07 NSAE-00 TRSE-00 EB-07 MC-02 ACDA-07 AID-05
IGA-02 DHA-02 /065 W
-----030200Z 096118 /73

R 021633Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5822
INFO SECDEF WASHDC
USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 2683

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS GT US
SUBJECT: PRESIDENT'S REQUEST TO PURCHASE US AMMUNITION

REF: A. GUATEMALA 2559, B. 75 GUATEMALA 6922, C. 76 STATE 7207

1. SUMMARY: EMBASSY BELIEVES GOG REQUEST TO PURCHASE FIVE MILLION ROUNDS OF 5.56 AMMUNITION AFFORDS US EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY TO REPAIR SOME OF DAMAGE CAUSED TO US-GOG BILATERAL RELATIONS OVER PAST 18 MONTHS BY GUATEMALAN RESENTMENT OVER US ARMS SUPPLY POLICY. CONSEQUENTLY, EMBASSY STRONGLY SUPPORTS RECOMMENDATION OF COMUSMILGP FOR EXTRAORDINARY HANDLING OF GUATEMALAN REQUEST. END SUMMARY

2. CLIMATE OF US-GOG RELATIONS HAS BEEN ADVERSELY AFFECTED OVER PAST 18 MONTHS BY GUATEMALAN RESENTMENT AT US DELAYS IN AGREEING TO SUPPLY GUATEMALA WITH C-47 AIRCRAFT UNDER PEACE MAYA, AND GOG SUBSEQUENT CANCELLATION OF AGREEMENT IN SEPTEMBER 1975. SINCE THEN, MINISTER OF DEFENSE TOLD AMBASSADOR, GOG HAS OPERATED UNDER ASSUMPTION THAT US COULD NOT BE COUNTED UPON AS A SOURCE OF SUPPLY FOR MILITARY EQUIPMENT. THIS LED GOG TO PURCHASE ISRAELI GALIL RAFLES IN EARLY 1976 WITHOUT WAITING FOR US RESPONSE TO GOG
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 GUATEM 02683 021748Z

REQUEST TO PURCHASE 15,000 -16 RIFLES AND FIVE MILLION ROUNDS OF AMMUNITION. MINISTER OF DEFENSE TOLD AMBASSADOR THAT GOG BELIEVED US HAD AGREED TO SALE OF M-16'S ONLY BECAUSE IT KNEW GOG HAD ALREADY DECIDED TO BUY ISRAELI RIFLES. SINCE THEN, ANY BUREAUCRATIC DELAY IN RESUPPLY OF AMMUNITION OR SERVICING OF DEFENSE EQUIPMENT HAS BEEN SEEN BY GUATEMALA AS DELIBERATE AND POLITICALLY

MOTIVATED.

3. BECAUSE OF IMPORTANCE OF ARMY IN GUATEMALA AND FACT PRESIDENT LAUGERUD IS AN ARMY GENERAL THIS RESENTMENT AND SUSPICION HAS AFFECTED OUR OVERALL POLITICAL RELATIONSHIP. IN PARTICULAR, WHEN DEPARTMENT REPORT ON HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN GUATEMALA WAS RELEASED BY CONGRESS, GUATEMALA'S NEGATIVE REACTION TO US "INTERFERENCE" IN THEIR INTERNAL AFFAIRS WAS INTENSIFIED BY FEELING THAT US HAD ALREADY TURNED ITS BACK ON ITS "LOYAL ALLY."

4. WHILE US-GUATEMALAN DIFFERENCES OVER HUMAN RIGHTS WILL CONTINUE, EMBASSY BELIEVES PRESIDENT LAUGERUD'S EMBARRASSMENT AT HAVING PURCHASED INFERIOR CHINESE AMMUNITION GIVES US OPPORTUNITY TO REMOVE SOME OF RESENTMENT AND SUSPICION FELT BY GUATEMALA OVER OUR MILITARY SALES RELATIONSHIP AND THEREBY HELP REMOVE ONE UNNECESSARY IRRITANT IN OUR OVERALL BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP. QUICK APPROVAL WILL NOT MEAN, TO US OR TO GOG, THAT US HAS CHANGED ITS POLICY OF REVIEWING ALL GOG ARMS PURCHASE REQUESTS TO TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION EFFECT OF BELIZE SITUATION, BUT IT MAY HELP REMOVE FEELING EXPRESSED BY SOME TO EMBASSY THAT "US IS OUT TO GET GUATEMALA." THIS COULD BE PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT DURING THE UPCOMING ELECTION YEAR.

5. ON DECEMBER 9, 1975, EMBASSY RECOMMENDED (REF B) THAT GOG REQUEST TO PURCHASE M-16'S AND AMMUNITION BE APPROVED AND DEPARTMENT AGREED ON JANUARY 12, 1976 (REF C).
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 GUATEM 02683 021748Z

WHEN GOG DROPPED ITS INTEREST IN US RIFLES BUT MAINTAINED ITS REQUEST FOR AMMUNITION, THE SALE OF FIVE MILLION ROUNDS WAS APPROVED A SECOND TIME ON FEBRUARY 10, 1976. HOWEVER, SEVEN MONTHS THEN WENT BY - UNTIL SEPTEMBER 13 - BEFORE A LETTER OF OFFER WAS GIVEN THE GUATEMALAN EMBASSY.

6. IN VIEW OF TWO PRIOR APPROVALS OF THIS SALE BY THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WE ASSUME THAT APPROVAL OF THE EW REQUEST WILL BE ROUTINE. BUT WE HOPE, AND URGENTLY REQUEST, THAT STATE AND DEFENSE WILL EXPEDITE THE HANDLING OF THE PAPERWORK THAT IS NECESSARY AFTER FORMAL APPROVAL IS GIVEN, AND THAT SEVEN MONTHS NOT AGAIN ELAPSE BEFORE THE GUATEMALAN GOVERNMENT IS GIVEN A LETTER OF OFFER.
BOSTER

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AMMUNITION, SMALL ARMS, MILITARY SALES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 02-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977GUATEM02683
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770153-0991
Format: TEL
From: GUATEMALA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t197705104/aaaadmmq.tel
Line Count: 111
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: d645e287-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION PM
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 GUATEMALA 2559, 75 GUATEMALA 6922, 76 STATE 7207
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 16-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2333957
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESIDENT'S REQUEST TO PURCHASE US AMMUNITION
TAGS: MASS, GT, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/d645e287-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009